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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING: A FORCE MULTIPLIER WITH RELEVANCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

BY

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ABSTRACT

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U.S. Security Assistance has been, and continues to be an important policy instrument in the pursuit of U.S. National Security Strategy. In particular, the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, the smallest component of U.S. Security Assistance, plays a vitally important role in the U.S. Government's ability to engage with, and enlarge a growing community of newly emerging democracies. The return on investment of the IMET program has been documented and recognized as significant. This low cost program has trained and educated many foreign military and civilian students. Their exposure to American culture and values has been viewed as an investment, not only in friendship, but in the student's ability to influence their country's policies and promote U.S. ideals and interests. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is imperative that the IMET program be expanded. For the U.S. to succeed in promoting long term stability, encouraging military cooperation in coalition operations, and fostering the growth of democracy and human rights worldwide, we must immediately improve on this already excellent program.

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“Protecting our nation’s security—our people, our territory and our way of life—is my Administration’s foremost mission and constitutional duty”

William J. Clinton Feb. 1996

Since the beginning of the cold war the United States has relied on its security assistance program as an instrument of national security and foreign policy. Recognizing full well, that in a world of bi-polar competition with the Soviet Union, it was necessary to make substantial investments in the security and viability of those friendly countries which not only lacked the capital to finance a strong defense, but also in those countries where the U.S. desired a strong strategic presence. Deterrence and conflict prevention have long been a central element of our national security strategy.

The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, although the smallest component of the overall Security Assistance Program, had for many years received the undying support of the U.S. Congress. This support was due in part to the recognized high return for dollars spent, but also because of the relatively low-cost and low-risk associated with the program. The premise underlying IMET is that

educating younger foreign military officers in the United States, invests in the future promotion of U.S. interests.

Notwithstanding the benefits of the IMET program, economic priorities coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union have mandated budget cuts across the spectrum of defense spending. The IMET program has been an unfortunate victim of spending cutbacks. For example, the IMET funding level for FY 91 was approximately \$47 million compared to the FY 96 program which was funded at \$39 million.¹ This downward spiral in IMET spending poses a substantial impedance not only to the realization of our current national security strategy, but to our ability to maintain our credibility as the world's only super power. If we are truly to reap the benefits of a newly created multi-polar world, we must support and engage newly emerging democracies with a strong and aggressive IMET program.

The purpose of this research paper is to examine the scope of the IMET program, identify its past and current contributions to U.S. global policy, and to advocate for the program's expanded funding and scope. Additionally, I will show that IMET is relevant to the security interests of the United States, especially during a time when the U.S. must exercise global leadership.

THE TENANTS OF IMET

Over the past forty years, through the use of a low cost grant program, the United States has been able to train over half a million

foreign civilian and military personnel from more than 100 different countries. Through the implementation of the IMET program, future leaders of foreign defense and related establishments are exposed to U.S. values, regard for human rights, democratic institutions, and the role of a professional military under civilian control.²

The IMET program is an instrument of national security and foreign policy and remains a key component of U.S. security assistance, providing U.S. training on a grant basis to students from allied and friendly nations. The IMET program is an investment in ideas and people which has an overall positive impact on the numerous people trained under the program. It is a program that, for a relatively modest investment, provides professional instruction and presents democratic alternatives to key foreign military and civilian leaders.³

Our national security strategy is based on enlarging the community of market democracies while deterring and containing a range of threats to our nation, our allies and our interests.⁴ As one of the three pillars of this strategy, enhancing security continues to present formidable challenges in a very uncertain and dangerous world. In the pursuit of national security enhancement, the U.S. government has, at its disposal, a wide range of policy instruments, least of which is the U.S. Security Assistance Program. Although the smallest component of this program, the IMET program is one of the least costly and yet most effective programs for maintaining U.S. influence and credibility in

friendly countries while assisting those same countries in their transition to functioning democracies.

OBJECTIVES

The three primary objectives of the IMET program are defined in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Those objectives are as follows:

- * To encourage effective mutually beneficial relations and increased understanding between the United States and foreign countries in furtherance of the goals of international peace and security;

- * To improve the ability of participating foreign countries to utilize their resources, including defense articles and services obtained from the United States, with maximum effectiveness, thereby contributing to greater self-reliance by such countries; and,

- * To increase the awareness of nationals of foreign countries participating in such activities of basic issues involving internationally recognized human rights.⁵

The IMET objectives are achieved through a variety of military education and training activities conducted by the DoD for foreign military and civilian officials. These include: formal instruction involving over 2,000 courses taught at approximately 150 military schools and installations; on-the-job training; observer training; orientation tours for key senior military and civilian officials; and mobile education teams which take the curriculum to the host country.⁶

RECENT CHANGES

Over the past fifteen years, the objectives of the IMET program have not changed. However, to meet the many challenges and respond to the dynamic changes posed by the recent transition to democracy in countries throughout the world, and in particular Eastern Europe, the IMET program has been expanded to incorporate programs which focus on individual rights in a democratic society, defense resource management, military justice, and civil military relations. In an address presented by Secretary Of Defense William J. Perry, at the Business Week Forum, on January 18th 1996, in Washington D.C., the secretary stated, "I never imagined that I would be running a school to teach Russian Military Officers about democracy, budgeting, and testifying to a parliament, and yet that's exactly what we do at the Marshall Center in Garmish Germany, and have been doing it the last two years".⁷ The course Secretary Perry spoke of, is funded under the auspices of IMET. Interestingly enough, over the past few years the principal category of instruction requested by foreign countries has changed from technical training courses to Professional Military Education. Attendance at U.S. Command and Staff Colleges, as well as U.S. War Colleges are the most sought after IMET funded courses available. This change has come about as political and military authorities in many new democracies are contending with the need for institutional adjustments to create a different political culture that emphasizes increased interaction with

civilian authorities.⁸

IMET is expanding and taking new directions in response to the changing global political scene. Some of the significant changes we are witnessing in the program are taking place in order to align program objectives with U.S. foreign policy interests in the post-Cold War environment. For example, a number of new and meaningful courses have been established to meet U.S. foreign policy objectives as important bilateral relations are developed with emerging democracies around the world. Some specific objectives of these programs are:

- *To foster greater respect for and understanding of the principle of civilian control of the military;

- *To improve military justice systems and procedures in accordance with internationally recognized human rights;

- *To introduce military and civilian participants to the U.S. judicial system, the two party system, the role of a free press and other communications media, minority problems, the purpose and scope of labor unions, the U.S. economic system, educational institutions, and the way in which all of these elements of American democracy reflect the U.S. commitment to the basic principles of internationally recognized human rights;

- * To resolve the civil-military conflict that a country actually confronts, and bring together key military and civilian leaders in order to break down barriers that often exist between armed forces, and

legislators of competing political parties; and

*To modify existing civil-military mechanisms used by democracies to meet a country's own unique circumstances.⁹

SUPPORTING NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

As part of the U.S. National Security Strategy, enhancing the security of the United States relies very heavily on strong, lasting security relationships with allies and other friendly nations. Like the U.S. National Security Strategy, the current National Military Strategy, in defining the national military objectives of promoting stability and thwarting aggression, cite "peacetime engagement" as a pillar in promoting that stability. Critical elements of peacetime engagement are security assistance as well as military-to-military contact. A strong, viable and properly funded IMET program is, by its very nature, peacetime engagement at its best.

Although diminishing dollars in all security assistance programs have diminished our capabilities to influence and reward friendly nations, the IMET program still, I believe, delivers the most "bang for the buck". The dividends paid by military-to-military contact can not be overstated. While working at the Joint US Military Assistance Group, Greece, I was heavily involved in assisting Hellenic Military Officers prepare for their IMET funded trip to the U.S. Generally speaking, only the most capable personnel with recognized potential are selected to participate in the IMET program. It is the students own government

which makes the selection. However, the U.S. Mission or Military Assistance Group to that country will often make suggestions and recommendations based on gathered information and general knowledge of certain officers and civilians. On more than one occasion, the officer selected by the Hellenic Defense Ministry to travel to the U.S. had serious misperceptions about the United States, its people, and our political and military system. It was particularly rewarding to all of us at the Military Assistance Group when those same officers returned with not only a superb military educational experience, but with a new found respect and admiration for what America stands for. These officers, once they returned to Greece, were eager to share both the educational lessons learned, as well as their social and cultural experiences. The IMET program produces professionally informed, and operationally skilled officers, but in addition, creates foreign officers who serve, unwittingly as they may, as American Ambassadors.

AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

IMET is, and has been, considered a long term investment in those who attend training. It is an investment not only in the individual, but also in that persons ability to influence their country's policies, and to promote U.S. ideals and interests. The ultimate goal of the IMET program is to have former IMET students rise to prominence in their respective countries. While rising to positions of prominence, these same students will be inculcated with a set of newly defined values and beliefs

such as human rights, civilian control of the military, and tolerance of descent. When one views IMET in terms of success, it is apparent even to the skeptic, that the program has been extremely successful. We have indeed gotten our money's worth. The military-to-military relationship has paid dividends both for the United States and our allies and friends. Many past IMET students have risen to prominence in their respective governments and militaries.¹⁰ Those prominent positions filled by past students include heads of state, chiefs of service, general or flag rank officers, heads of military academies or training commands, senior NATO officials, ambassadors and national business leaders. The career success rate for IMET graduates of U.S. Professional Military Education (PME) programs is very high. "Usually those chosen to attend IMET courses are top quality people," according to the Defense Security Assistance Agency. The Agency has begun assembling service career data on IMET graduates. The Army reports that it has graduated from its PME programs 5,330 foreign students from 110 different countries. Of those, 23 have become heads of state; 280, ministers, ambassadors or legislators; 241 chiefs of staff and 1,965, flag and general officers. Navy data reveals that 28 of its foreign PME graduates have obtained cabinet levels, while 94 have been promoted to Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) equivalents. The Air Force reports that 22 foreign PME graduates have become general officers.¹¹

AS A FORCE MULTIPLIER

Lieutenant General Teddy Allen, AUS, past director of the Defense Security Assistance Agency, believes that the military-to-military bonds created through the IMET program have proven not only helpful, but have served as a force multiplier in instances like Corazon Aquino's rise to power in the Philippines, Latin American participation in the war against narco-terrorism and Operation Desert Shield/Storm.¹²

General Allen has been a witness to the importance of these bonds. From 1984 to 1986, he was the Chief of the United States Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) in the Philippines during the Aquino accession. General Allen attended the Army Command and General Staff at Ft. Levenworth along with six Filipino classmates. During his service in Manila, five of those six were promoted to brigadier general in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.¹³

On the front lines of the war against narco-terrorism, Columbia is another country where IMET fostered bonds provide access and close ties. Graduates of IMET training include a recent Minister of Defense, Commander of the Military Forces, Chief of the Joint Staff, Commander of the Army, Intelligence Director, Director of the Military Forces War College and a director of Army Instruction and Training. In FY89, Columbia ranked first world-wide with 811 IMET students. Other regional totals for that year include Bolivia with 97, Ecuador with 221 and Venezuela with 34 students.¹⁴ During the coalition building phase

of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, IMET played a pivotal role in bringing together coalition military leaders. The U.S. did not have to scramble to find friends in that region. U.S. trained officers of our coalition partners provided the force multiplier which the U.S. greatly needed during all phases of the operation. The IMET program had accomplished its intended goal. IMET helped foster the building of mutual trust, effective communications, an understanding of interoperability, and familiarity with our military doctrine.

As for countries assisting Operation Desert Shield/Storm IMET graduates included Egypt's Minister of Defense and Morocco's Director General of National Security, the Chief of Air Force Training, Chief of Naval Personnel and Training and Chief of Naval Operations. Additionally, many senior foreign officers of the U.S. led coalition were recipients of IMET funded training.¹⁵

In Turkey, during Operation Desert Shield and Provide Comfort, the planning and execution of complex operations at the national level, as well as the combined special activities along the border with Iraq, were facilitated by many Turkish officers that had once been assigned in the United States as International Military Students.¹⁶

Another example where the IMET program has served as a force multiplier is when one evaluates the military professionalism of the composite battalion from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) serving with U.S. forces in Haiti. The technical competence of the Eastern

Caribbean soldiers, which has been praised officially by the U.S. Atlantic Command, can be directly attributed to exposure of its officers to U.S. tactical, logistical and leadership training.¹⁷ The combined experiences promoted by IMET involvement and interaction, promote cohesive coalition operations wherever they may occur.

U. S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE SUCCESS STORIES

The following are just a few IMET funded U.S. Army War College graduates who have risen to prominence within their respective government:

-Minister Rhee Byoung Tae, Republic of Korea

Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea

Class of 1979

-Lieutenant General Romulo F. Yap, Philippines

Commanding General, Philippine Army

Class of 1980

-Lieutenant General Ferenc Vegh, Hungary

Chief of Defense & Commander of the Hungarian

Home Defense Forces

Class of 1993

EXPANDED IMET

Public Law 101-513, signed November 5, 1990, authorized the establishment of a program within IMET that is focused on training

foreign civilian and military officials in managing and administering military establishments and budgets, creating and maintaining effective military judicial systems and military codes of conduct, including observance of internationally recognized human rights, and fostering greater respect for the principle of civilian control of the military. This initiative is called Expanded IMET (E-IMET). Each year the program is broadened. In 1994, Congress further authorized participation by members of national legislatures who are responsible for oversight and management of the military and by individuals who are not members of government, such as educators, lawyers, and both business and community leaders. The E-IMET initiative is accomplished via educational programs, offered by DoD and Service schools, and mobile education teams which conduct training in the host country. The E-IMET was recently broadened to include environmental resources management and environmental law. The E-IMET program is constantly evolving and the Defense Security Assistance Agency continues to work with the Military Services to find new and appropriate programs for future inclusion.¹⁸

FUNDING

Over the past ten years, the level of funding for IMET programs has decreased substantially. Overall foreign assistance levels are declining as the U.S. Congress and the President make substantive efforts to limit spending and balance the budget. From FY 1991 to FY 1995, IMET

funding dropped from 47.2 million dollars to 26.3 million. Many countries that once benefited from the IMET program found themselves excluded. Fortunately, however, in 1995 the program was reevaluated as to its responsiveness to a rapidly changing global political scene. After some very significant changes were made to align the program more closely with the objectives of the Security Assistance Program, as defined in the Foreign Assistance Act, the IMET program received an additional thirteen million dollars for FY 1996.¹⁹

IMET is one the few foreign-aid initiatives Congress continues to consider relevant, useful, and worthy of funding; and for good reason. The program promotes U.S. interests now and for the foreseeable future.²⁰ In addition to promoting U.S. interests, the program is indeed, as previously alluded to, a “force multiplier.” In the post cold war era, when peacekeeping, peacemaking, and humanitarian relief have become the focus of the Department of Defense, the U.S. military will continue to be called upon to organize or to join coalitions with allies and friends in fulfilling those extremely challenging commitments. A successful and properly funded IMET program strengthens a coalition when it brings together U.S. political and military personnel with the leadership of our coalition partners that, through IMET training courses and an exposure to U.S. values, have an understanding and appreciation of ultimate U.S. end states.

THE CINC'S PERSPECTIVE

Unified Commanders affect country military assistance programs via the Annual Integrated Assessment of Security Assistance (AIASA) prepared by the U.S. country team. Their concerns about the effectiveness and responsiveness are articulated to the Department of Defense in this lengthy assessment. Additionally, once every year, each geographic Commander in Chief presents his unified command's annual report to Congress. The Senate Armed Services and National Security Committees receive the command's posture statement and hear the CINC's explanation of his strategic concerns and requirements which invariably include IMET related issues.²¹ The following statements made by a number of U.S. Unified Commanders lend credence to the importance our CINC's place in the IMET program and the program's essential contributions to cooperative engagement as well as bilateral and multilateral cooperation:

A premier component within the Security Assistance program is the IMET program. IMET promotes military-to-military relations and exposes international military and civilian officials to U.S. values and democratic processes. In FY94 we sent 876 international students to the U.S. from the European Command and paid for seven English language laboratories in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, all at a cost of only \$11.6 million. Twenty percent of all flag officers in Turkey are IMET trained. Eighty percent of the senior Leadership in Portugal are IMET graduates. More than 500 senior civilian and military leaders throughout the USEUCOM AOR are IMET trained. Over the years, this familiarity with U.S. doctrine and equipment leads to repeat equipment orders and favorable base rights negotiations. Several instances of immediate support during Desert Shield/Storm were directly attributed to relations

fostered through IMET. Simply put, IMET is the centerpiece of Security Assistance.²²

General George A. Joulwan, USA, Commander In Chief, United States Central Command

The U.S. has benefited enormously from investments made over the years in the International Military Education and Training program and Foreign Military Financing. These programs have provided the U.S. government opportunities to assist friendly states in meeting legitimate self-defense needs, gain access, deter conflict, and promote stability and democratic ideals. By promoting respect for human rights, civilian control of the military, democratic ideals, while enhancing self-defense capabilities, we reduce instability that produces regional conflicts and the associated need to commit forces to protect U.S. national interests in the future.²³

General J. H. Binford Peay III, USA, Commander in Chief, United States Central Command

International Military Education and Training is one of our most effective, yet inexpensive, cooperative engagement reassurance activities in the training of young military leaders from the USPACOM AOR in the United States. The exposure to American values is an invaluable individual contribution to the goal of a more democratic world. The long lasting friendship formed between international classmates creates an unsurpassed opportunity for future professional communication. As these students return home, and ascend to positions of prominence in military and government positions, the positive value and influence expands to an even greater scope. This tremendously cost-effective program should not be subjected to harmful restrictions. If we do not make the personal contacts now with the region's future military leadership, we forgo irretrievable opportunities for future cooperation and influence.²⁴

Admiral Richard C. Macke, U. S. Navy, Commander United States Pacific Command

Although total security assistance has decreased, one bright spot is the increase in the IMET funding level for SouthCom. Hopefully this increase is the beginning of a trend. IMET continues to be one of our most cost

effective means of inculcating U.S. values and beliefs into the region's militaries. In Fiscal Year 1995, this program provided training for 1,524 students. This low-cost, high-return program is worthy of continued support and expansion.²⁵

Rear Admiral James B. Perkins III, U. S. Navy, Acting Commander in Chief, United States Southern Command

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the range of Foreign Military Interaction programs. These programs are proactive tools U.S. geographic CINC's use to shape the strategic landscape in support of national security objectives. Examples of key programs include Foreign Military Sales and International Military Education and Training.²⁶

General Wayne A. Downing, USA, Commander in Chief, United States Operations Commanding

A CHANGING WORLD ORDER

All of America's strategic interests—from promoting prosperity at home to checking global threats abroad before they threaten our interests—are served by enlarging the community of democratic and free market nations. Thus, working with new democratic states to help preserve them as democracies committed to free markets and respect for human rights, is a key part of our national security strategy.²⁷

One of the most gratifying and encouraging developments of the past 15 years is the explosion in the number of states moving away from repressive governance toward democracy. Since the success of many of those governments is by no means assured, our strategy of enlargement must focus on the consolidation of those regimes and the broadening of their commitment to democracy. At the same time, we seek to increase respect for fundamental human rights in all states and encourage an

evolution to democracy where that is possible.²⁸ The current U.S. administration substantially expanded U.S. support for democratic and market reform in Russia, Ukraine and the other new independent states of the former Soviet Union, including a comprehensive assistance package for Ukraine.²⁹

IMET is an important vehicle to help turn a former military threat into a country that holds dear those same values as we do, while strongly supporting economic and military partnership with the U.S. Our intensified interaction with Ukraine has helped move that country onto the path of economic, social and military reform which is critical to its long term stability.

UKRAINE: ONE EXAMPLE

IMET is the primary U.S. assistance program in Ukraine. It provides the U.S. with the close military-to-military contact which we seek. With a FY 1996 program of \$950,000, officers and senior officials from the Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Economics, Border Troops and other agencies are becoming familiar with U.S. techniques and procedures. As the pool of English speaking candidates grows, plans have been made to adjust the ratio of funding English language to technical training, with the result that even more students will be able to be trained in the U.S. In 1997 alone, the U.S. expects to place students in a variety of entry-level and technical courses, in the Command and Staff Colleges of all services, and put five students in graduate level

training at the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey California.³⁰

In-country language training is the basis for the IMET program in Ukraine. With four labs in place and a fifth scheduled to be installed in the near future, Ukraine is now able to train many of its IMET students before their departure to technical courses in the U.S. This provides a steady pool of students who qualify for courses in the U.S. In fact, three quarters of all FY 1997 students were identified before the end of FY 1996, and over one-third of all students had already completed a U.S. sponsored in-country English language training program.³¹

Ukraine is but one example of the necessary on-going effort being made by the United States to assist newly emerging democracies, especially those states once belonging to the former USSR. These are countries which must quickly grasp the concepts of freedom, independence, responsible world partnership and an inherent desire for peaceful coexistence. The IMET program is the best mechanism available to the U.S. to insure close cooperation and institutional understanding and trust.....ingredients which have so long been lacking in our relationships with those countries and regions of the world.

CONCLUSION

The success of the IMET program is fully recognized . Unless we nurture relationships with the many post cold war emerging democracies by increasing the funding for IMET, and allowing those countries full participation in the program, we may well be setting a course which

undermines the long term success of U.S. policies, programs and national objectives. Although the former Soviet Union no longer poses the threat of global confrontation as it once did, there a number of countries busy building their arsenals to one day militarily challenge the U.S. The 21st century will be ripe with threats to, not only ourselves, but to our friends and allies. It is imperative that we ensure the close military-to-military relationships by exercising our strategy of engagement and enlargement. No cheaper and more reliable program currently exists to accomplish that goal, than the IMET program. Additionally, with more money directed to the IMET program, emphasis should be made on training more exceptional foreign civilians with recognized potential. Since civilian control of the military is a precept to a functioning democracy, the U.S. must ensure that quality U.S. trained foreign civilians are prepared to assume those vital roles within their countries.

Doubling the amount of money allocated to the IMET program would allow many of the newly emerging democracies, as well as non participating third world countries, to make an investment in their regional security. Their participation in IMET would also promote the military and political relationship with the U.S. that would guarantee the advancement of U.S. interests abroad.

When viewing the 1997 U.S. defense budget of 244.3 billion dollars, an additional \$50 million moved into the IMET program would be

rather insignificant to the total budget. However, the value gained and the rate of return would be significant. It takes money and foresight to make the program work. The foresight is firmly in place, let us now put the dollars where tremendous return is virtually guaranteed.

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